

Coins

Dollar bills and values, Barr none

By Roger Boye

SOME questions and answers from the numismatic mailbox:

Q.—Are \$1 bills, signed by Joseph W. Barr, worth saving? He was in office for such a short time. S. R.

A.—Joseph W. Barr was secretary of the treasury from December, 1968, to January, 1969. Dollar bills with his signature [series 1963-B] are not unusually valuable. Uncirculated bills sell for \$1.75 or less in most coin shops. Dealers might pay you \$1.15 or \$1.25 for an uncirculated specimen.

Bills which show wear [soiled or folded] from circulation are worth little, if anything, to a collector [except, of course, \$1].

Q.—I have read that Kennedy half-dollars made from

1965 to 1970 are valuable. Why? They are less than 10 years old. A. A. N.

A.—Half-dollars [as well as quarters and dimes], made in 1964 and before, contain 90 per cent silver. Because of the tremendous increase in the price of silver in recent months, these coins—regardless of the date—can be sold for at least 225 per cent over face value. Of course, silver coins with “rare” or less common dates are worth more than the 225 per cent.

In 1965 silver was eliminated from the quarter and dime. In the half-dollar, however, the silver content was reduced from 90 per cent to 40 per cent. In 1971 silver was eliminated from the half-dollar.

Because of the high price

of silver, dealers are buying these half-dollars containing 40 per cent silver for about 70 cents a coin.

Incidentally, one half-dollar made during this period for general circulation, the 1970-D [D for Denver Mint], sells for \$16 in uncirculated condition. This is because comparatively few half-dollars were made at the Denver Mint in 1970, only 2.1 million. [About 302.1 million were made at the Denver Mint in 1971.]

Q.—My father died recently and left a big box of old Canadian coins. What books can I buy to learn about them? C. W.

A.—Two basic books on Canadian coins are “Standard Catalogue of Canadian Coins, Tokens and Paper

Money” by J. E. Charlton and “Coins of Canada” by J. A. Harby and R. C. Willey. They can be purchased in most coin stores and in some book stores.

Q.—A silver dollar I found in an old trunk is dated 1883 and has a small “O” on the back side near the bottom. What does that “O” mean? W. B.

A.—The “O” stands for New Orleans, the place where the coin was minted. Next week’s column will discuss U. S. mints in more detail.

If you have questions about coins and collecting, send them to me, in care of Room 414, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Av., Chicago, Ill. 60611. But, please, do not send coins.